

Message Text

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45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1477

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2416

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (ZEITLIN, ARNOLD)

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE COMPLAINTS AGAINST ARNOLD ZEITLIN

REF: MANILA 2288

1. AP CORRESPONDENT ZEITLIN CALLED ON ME MORNING MARCH 1 TO INFORM ME OF CURRENT STATUS PHILIPPINE COMPLAINTS AGAINST HIM, BUT ALSO TO RELAY REQUEST FROM WES GALLAGHER AND STAN SWINTON FOR ME TO RAISE ANTI-SEMITIC ASPECTS OF THESE COMPLAINTS WITH ROMULO. SINCE I WAS LUNCHING WITH ROMULO, I WENT IMMEDIATELY FROM SESSION WITH ZEITLIN TO ROMULO.

2. I OPENED CONVERSATION WITH ROMULO BY PROVIDING HIM WITH COPY WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE CONTAINED WIRELESS FILE FEBRUARY 28. I RELAYED GALLAGHER AND SWINTON CONCERN THAT ACCUSATIONS OF PRO-ZIONIST SENTIMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO AP COULD JEOPARDIZE THEIR CORRESPONDENTS IN ARAB COUNTRIES AND GENERALLY IMPUGN THEIR OBJECTIVITY. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT FACT THESE ACCUSATIONS WERE LEVELLED BY ROMULO IN NOTE TO ARAB AMBASSADORS WOULD RESULT IN PAINFUL PUBLIC CONSEQUENCES
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FOR ROMULO PERSONALLY, AS WELL AS FOR PHILIPPINES.

3. ROMULO WAS CLEARLY DISTRESSED BY MY APPROACH, AND SHOOK HIS HEAD DOLEFULLY. AT FIRST, HE REJOINTED BY SERIES OF STIPULATIONS AGAINST ZEITLIN, BUT LATER WENT ON TO SAY "I'M SORRY," IN A MANNER WHICH LEFT THE OBJECT OF HIS SORROW SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS. IN RESPONSE TO MY DIRECT QUESTION, HE SAID THE PUBLIC RELEASE OF THE NOTE BY PHIL MISSIONS ABROAD WAS "AN EXCESS OF ZEAL."

4. AT END OF LUNCH, ROMULO CONFIDED TO ME THAT NOTE "HAD BEEN WRITTEN BY MALACANANG," THAT HE SIGNED IT WITH MISGIVINGS, THAT IT WAS PART OF THE PRO-ARAB OIL PROCUREMENT CAMPAIGN, AND THAT IT SHOULD, IN ANY EVENT, NEVER HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLIC. HE SAID HE WOULD SEND A SHORT PERSONAL NOTE TO KAY GRAHAM, AND WORRIED THAT THE NEW YORK TIMES WOULD ALSO BE A PROBLEM. IF NYT CORRESPONDENT LELYVELD FILES A STORY (WHICH HE HAS TOLD ME HE WILL) ROMULO WILL ALSO SEND A NOTE TO ABE ROSENTHAL.

5. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS LUNCHEON CONVERSATION, EMBASSY PRESS ATTACHE INFORMED ZEITLIN OF SUBSTANCE PARAS 2 AND 3 ABOVE, BUT OMITTED ANY REFERENCE TO PARA 4 WHICH ROMULO GAVE ME IN CONFIDENCE. I MUST EMPHASIZE THAT DEPT OFFICIALS, IN ANY CONVERSATION WITH AP REPRESENTATIVES, SHOULD PROTECT ROMULO CONFIDENCE PARA 4, BUT MAY DRAW UPON SUBSTANCE PARAS 2 AND 3 TO ADVISE GALLAGHER AND SWINTON OF ACTION TAKEN.
SULLIVAN

NOTE BY OC/T: MANILA 2288 NOT RECEIVED IN DEPARTMENT.

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